

UNCLAS 30/PMU/SU JA SPACE
 *** BEGIN MESSAGE 8 ***

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 SERIAL: LDO612182290
 PASS: COPY TO [REDACTED]
 COUNTRY: USSR
 SUBJ: JAPANESE COSMONAUT'S OBSERVATIONS FROM SPACE
 REF: LDO612121290 MOSCOW TASS ENGLISH 061201 -- SOVIET-JAPANESE
 CREW CONTINUE SPACE MISSION
 SOURCE: MOSCOW TASS IN ENGLISH 1804 GMT 6 DEC 90
 TEXT:

//((BY TASS CORRESPONDENT RENA KUZNETSOVA))
 ((TEXT)) MOSCOW DECEMBER 6 TASS -- "MY HEART FILLED WITH JOY WHEN I FIRST SAW JAPAN FROM THE ORBIT. MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS -- MY MOTHERLAND WAS FAR AWAY AND I AM ALWAYS EXPECTED THERE," JAPANESE COSMONAUT TOYEHIRO AKIYAMA TOLD REPORTERS TODAY, COMMENTING ON HIS FIRST IMPRESSIONS IN SPACE.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT A MISSION CONTROL CENTRE NEAR MOSCOW AND SOVIET AND FOREIGN REPORTERS USED THE TV LINK-UP TO SHOWER THE CREW WITH QUESTIONS.

THE SOYUZ TM-11 SPACE SHIP, CARRYING TWO SOVIET COSMONAUTS VIKTOR AFANASYEV AND MUSA MANAROV, AND JAPANESE TELEVISION REPORTER TOYEHIRO AKIYAMA, WAS LAUNCHED ON DECEMBER 2.

IT DOCKED WITH THE MIR SPACE STATION THREE DAYS AGO AND THE INTERNATIONAL CREW JOINED GENNADIY MANAKOV AND GENNADIY STREKALOV WHO ARE IN THEIR FIFTH MONTH IN ORBIT.

COMMENTING TO TASS ABOUT HOW HE COPED WITH WEIGHTLESSNESS, AKIYAMA SAID HE FELT A LITTLE HEAVY IN THE HEAD FOR THE FIRST TWO OR THREE DAYS, BUT IS NOW FEELING ALL RIGHT.

"HOW ARE THE FROGS?" TASS ASKED HIM, REFERRING TO A MEDICO-BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT, WHICH IS PART OF A SPACE RESEARCH PROGRAMME.

"JUST FINE, THEY JUMP A LOT," THE JAPANESE COSMONAUT SAID.

"THE AIR OVER THE CARRIBEAN IS CLEAN AND BLUE. BUT THERE IS HAZE OVER JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES -- AND THIS IS ALARMING," AKIYAMA SAID, COMMENTING ON HIS VISUAL OBSERVATIONS.

IN TURN, MUSA MANAROV SAID THAT HE HAD ADAPTED TO WEIGHTLESSNESS FASTER THAN DURING HIS PREVIOUS FLIGHT.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY THE STAND-BY CREW -- ANATOLIY ARTSEBARSKI, SERGEY KRIKALEV AND RIYOKO TIKUTI.

RIYOKO HAD HER APPENDIX REMOVED ON THE EVE OF THE FLIGHT. "I WILL SOON BE DRINKING CHAMPAGNE WITH YOU, THE BOTTLE MUSA MANAROV AND VIKTOR ARANASYEV PRESENTED ME," SHE TOLD HER COLLEAGUES.

ASKED ABOUT ~~THE~~ SIGHTINGS, GENNADIY STREKALOV SAID THAT THE CREW SAW A HUGE BALL OF LIGHT FOR SEVEN MINUTES ON SEPTEMBER 26. THIS IS PROBABLY AN UNKNOWN NATURAL PHENOMENON, HE SAID.

(ENDALL) 061804 [REDACTED] 07/0215Z DEC

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